

# **POLITICAL AMBITION IN BRAZIL, 1945-95: THEORY AND EVIDENCE**

By

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## **ABSTRACT**

If politicians' behavior can be traced to their office goals, then rational-choice theories of politics must accurately describe politicians' office goals. In this paper, I explore the structure of high-level political careers in Brazil. I argue that one ought not assume that Brazilian congressional deputies desire to build a career within Congress. Instead, they value political jobs *outside* of Congress relatively more highly than building up seniority *within* Congress. To demonstrate the relatively low value deputies place on a career within Congress, I explore the rates at which Brazilian deputies run and win reelection since 1945, as well as the Brazilian Congress' lack of seniority norms and legislators' minor policy-making role. To demonstrate that Brazilian politicians value extra-congressional positions relatively highly, I will show that elected deputies often abandon their congressional seat immediately after election to take a position in municipal or state government, and also show that most after their relatively short congressional careers, deputies often return to positions in municipal and/or state government. My evidence confirms that Brazilian deputies do not act as "single-minded seekers of reelection," and that rational-choice theories of Brazilian (and comparative) politics need rethinking.

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## INTRODUCTION

Ambition theory suggests that politicians' behavior can be traced either wholly or partly to their office goals. Given this hypothesis, many scholars have explored political careers in the United States. Focusing on the House, scholars assume that representatives are "single-minded seekers of reelection" (Mayhew, 17). Comparativists interested in the consequences of political ambition have also employed a 'Mayhewian' assumption (cf. Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina 1987; Ramseyer and Rosenbluth 1992; Carey 1996), and some scholars have deduced conclusions about Brazilian politics explicitly assuming that congressional deputies there desire reelection (cf. Ames 1987, 104; Geddes 1994, 12).

However, while several studies of Brazilian legislators' *background* characteristics exist,<sup>1</sup> and some scholars have suggested that Brazilian politicians do *not* focus their career energies on the national legislature,<sup>2</sup> no empirical research exists that could empirically confirm or refute the assumption that Brazilian politicians desire to build a career within the national legislature. Because the 'predictive accuracy' of a rational-choice theory of politics depends on the empirical 'descriptive accuracy' of the theory's assumptions, verifying the descriptive accuracy of the Mayhewian assumption for Brazil is necessary: if the Mayhewian assumption is incorrect for Brazil, previous analyses of Brazilian politics might need rethinking.

In this paper I will demonstrate that Brazilian politicians do *not* seek to develop a career within the national legislature, as their counterparts in the United States do. Instead, political ambition in Brazil begins and ends at the *subnational* level, with the national legislature serving merely as a springboard to higher office, typically in the executive branch of state or municipal government. Elsewhere I extend this argument and explore the consequences employing a different rational-choice motivational assumption for analysis of Brazilian politics (Samuels 1998). My findings ought to encourage comparativists to investigate the structure of political careers in order to see if rational-choice theories can explain political behavior elsewhere.

The organization of this paper is as follows: in Section Two I briefly provide some terminology and explain the assumptions behind my approach. In Section Three, I describe the political career ladder in Brazil, focusing on the costs, benefits, and probabilities of attaining several political offices in Brazil. Section Four provides additional evidence of the absence of congressional careerism by describing how Brazilian deputies have historically 'rotated' from the Chamber to positions outside the Chamber immediately after election, and Section Five explores what Brazilian deputies do after their relatively short stints in the Chamber. Section Six concludes.

## SECTION TWO: ON THE STUDY OF POLITICAL CAREERS

I assume that a political career is possible, that politicians care about a career in politics, and that politicians are instrumentally rational: they will, when making career decisions, examine the alternatives, evaluate these options in terms of the probability of their leading to victory or defeat (with the value of victory depending on the costs and benefits associated with the office), and choose the alternative that yields the greatest expected value (Black, 146). We can formalize this relationship simply as:

$$U_i(\text{Running for Office } o) = P_{io}B_{io} - C_{io}$$

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<sup>1</sup> See Santos (1998) for an excellent review of this literature.

<sup>2</sup> See Packenham 1990[1970]; Figueiredo and Limongi 1996; and Santos 1998.

That is, the utility to individual ‘i’ of seeking office ‘o’ equals the probability of ‘i’s’ attaining office ‘o’ times the benefit to ‘i’ of attaining office ‘o’, minus the cost to ‘i’ of running for office ‘o’ (ibid.). In sum, an individual will decide to run for a certain office only if the expected benefits of holding that office times the probability of obtaining that office exceed the costs of running for that office. While the values of the variables in this simplified ‘calculus of ambition’ are in reality endogenous and interrelated, for any country we can assume that the value of  $B_o$  is determined exogenously, at least in the short term, and by using real-world examples and comparisons across countries we may gain some insight into the ways in which politicians view the relative costs, benefits, and probabilities attached to various political offices.

I assume that politicians hold ‘progressive’ ambition. Given that  $\{B_1, \dots, B_n\}$  is the set of expected benefits of each office in the political system,<sup>3</sup> if  $B_n \geq \dots \geq B_1$  for all politicians, then it follows that a politician would always take a more attractive office if it were offered without cost or risk (Rohde, 3). Given that our politicians are ambitiously power-seeking, they could attempt to start at the top of the career ladder. However, attempting to start at the top (like running for higher office) typically involves high costs and/or risks of defeat. For one, the probability of a novice’s winning  $B_n$  will be low; few will expect him to win, because he has not established a reputation at a lower level first. Or, a novice politician, having joined a group such as a party or faction that can confer higher-level office, could find that higher-ups employ a seniority system of sorts to control access to the higher echelons, and that she must ‘pay her dues’ before advancing another rung up the ladder.

Wherever the choicest jobs may be, few politicians start at the top. Cases of celebrities or wealthy private sector personalities who enter politics for one reason or another aside, around the world, political (as well as non-political) careers both within and outside of legislatures are *hierarchical*: a set of office benefits makes certain *organized* or sequenced career paths possible. The analyst must thus discern where politicians seek their life’s work by describing the costs, benefits, and probabilities of seeking various political offices and then explaining the hierarchy of career paths that emerge, moving from the lower-rung offices to the top-of-the-ladder offices. Ambition theory thus guides research into political careers by focusing research on the relative costs, benefits, and probabilities politicians associate with different political jobs.

### *Justification of Assumptions*

In this paper I adopt a rational-choice method that has most often been used to describe and explain politics in the United States. I acknowledge that this method has several potential pitfalls. First, the model’s stark motivational assumptions privilege office-seeking behavior, but many politicians may seek office for other reasons, such as promoting good policy, or to become rich. I agree with Arnold (1990, 5n), who wrote that “Some legislators may make trade-offs among their goals, incurring small electoral costs in the course of achieving some other important goal. [However,] incorporating such realism into my theoretical model would make it vastly more complicated without any obvious gain in explanatory power. Retaining the simpler hierarchy of goals has the added advantage of allowing one to see the extent to which legislators’ quest for reelection affects congressional policy-making.”

Second, we must wonder whether individual motivation in Brazil is not swamped by some other force, notably party discipline imposed from above. As Hibbing notes, in many European

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<sup>3</sup> Here  $\{1, \dots, n\}$  is the set of political offices and  $B_o$  is the average value politicians attach to office ‘o’.

democracies, “Parties are very good at obtaining the kind of behavior they want, effectively reducing legislators in many systems to little more than drones” (1998, 11). However, a comparison between Brazil and the United States is again warranted, because in both countries, possibly even more so in Brazil, national political parties are comparatively quite weak (cf. Mainwaring N.d. on Brazil), and consequently individual politicians have substantial leeway to make independent decisions. For example, in both countries, the decision to run for re-election is largely up to the individual - national parties cannot impede a candidacy. In Brazil, the *candidato nato* rule even places incumbents on the ballot *automatically*. Of course no politician makes a decision in a vacuum, and so it is to the Brazilian “political opportunity structure” that I will now turn.

## **THE POLITICAL CAREER LADDER IN BRAZIL**

Before attempting to answer the question “What is the structure of political careers in Brazil?” we should know something about what offices an ambitious Brazilian politician might seek. Brazil is a presidential, federal system that resembles the U.S. in its basic institutional structure. However, far fewer positions are elective in Brazil than in the United States. In Brazil, the set of elective positions includes president and vice-president (1 each), senator (N=83), governor and vice-governor (N=27 each), federal deputy (member of congress, N=513), state deputy (state assemblies are all unicameral, N=1069), municipal mayor and vice-mayor (N~5500 each), and city council member (N~75,000). No judges, sheriffs, county clerks, school board members, water district managers, or dog-catchers are elected in Brazil.

On the other hand, as was the case throughout much of U.S. history and is still the case in many countries, many important political positions in Brazil are appointed, such as minister of state, judge, head of a state-level executive-branch department, or countless other national, state, or municipal-level positions. One recent estimate gave the president the power to make 19,600 political appointments (Santos 1996, 224) (as compared to about 4,000 in the U.S. today), and governors may also have the power to hire and fire hundreds or even thousands of people.

Given this set of political offices, where in Brazil (or elsewhere) could a political ‘boss’ attempt to carve out a piece of political territory, and where could an aspiring politico hope to find lifetime employment? When assessing a potential job opportunity, an ambitious politician would ask three questions: 1) What’s it worth to me? 2) What are my chances? And 3) What’s it going to cost me? In an attempt to place political jobs in Brazil in hierarchical order, in this section I consider the answers to these questions.

### **What’s it Worth to Me?**

Here I will describe the office benefits associated with five sought-after political offices in Brazil: federal deputy, national minister, state governor, state secretary, and municipal mayor. I will focus on the office of federal deputy. In general, the benefits of any office include pay and other perquisites, the size of the budget the office controls, the ability to influence policy, the patronage opportunities attached to the office, the length of the term, the reelection and advancement potential, and so forth.

#### ***The Value of a Seat in the Chamber of Deputies***

Brazil’s 513 federal deputies have considerable political prestige as representatives of districts that conform to state boundaries. Deputies serve four-year terms, with no restriction on reelection. They receive good pay (currently about \$8,000 per month), free housing in Brasília,

four free air tickets to their home district every month, rights to hire several staff members at no personal expense, franking privileges, and many other perks. Deputies can submit about \$1.5 million in pork-barrel amendments to the yearly budget, they can participate in attempts to acquire additional funds for their states and regions, they sometimes nominate associates for positions in the federal bureaucracy, and they may be able to participate in important policy negotiations between the executive and the legislative branches. All of these activities may bring significant benefits to the people of a deputy's district, and may focus media attention on the deputy. In sum, while the position of federal deputy may not concentrate extraordinary powers in the hands of an individual, the office potentially holds significant political attraction.

Nevertheless, I found in interviews that Brazilian politicians consistently pointed to the relative political inefficacy of a Chamber seat. For example, in response to a question inquiring why so many deputies apparently desire to leave Congress even during the term, I received responses such as, "when you're in the executive, you can measure the effects of what you do. In the legislature, this is difficult."<sup>4</sup> One politician even claimed that serving as federal deputy in Brasília *harmed* his political career, because it drew him far away from his electoral bases. This ex-deputy, who now serves in a state assembly, claimed that

I perceived that if I didn't return [to state politics] to take care of my people, I would not last long in politics. I might have been able to win a second term, but by the end of my second term in Brasilia I would have been so far removed from things here that I would have been finished.<sup>5</sup>

In sum, while the position of federal deputy appears to hold some attractions, interviewed politicians consistently belittled the relative value of the office.

But what if interviewed politicians were not telling the whole truth? Possibly, congressional careerism does dominate, but Brazilian politicians think about political careers differently. Consequently, we must explore the data. Empirically, what would we expect to find if congressional careerism dominated in Brazil? If politicians valued a seat in congress relatively highly, then they would run for reelection at relatively high rates. However, Brazilian deputies' desire to build a congressional career is relatively low in comparative perspective. Table 1, column 2, presents the average percentage of deputies who sought reelection in each election year since 1945, beginning with the first "re-election" in 1950 (controlled elections are italicized). Columns three through six provide the percentage of deputies who run for reelection given the number of terms they have held.

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with Marcelo Caracas Linhares.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with César Souza.

**Table 1: Percentage of Deputies Seeking Reelection, and by # of Terms Held, at Each Election Date**

Year	%Seek	%Seek 2	%Seek 3	%Seek 4	%Seek 5>
1950	66.0	66.0	--	--	--
1954	68.6	67.8	70.3	--	--
1958	75.4	75.4	73.3	79.2	--
1962	74.8	78.0	72.6	67.4	72.0
1966	80.5	79.9	85.7	80.0	72.5
1970	61.9	66.7	64.4	48.6	50.0
1974	81.8	82.8	80.3	83.8	71.4
1978	82.1	82.0	83.7	84.2	72.5
1982	74.9	75.9	70.1	80.0	70.7
1986	64.1	63.9	62.4	69.8	59.6
1990	70.1	71.1	67.4	66.7	72.7
1994	78.7	79.0	68.1	80.0	82.1

The average rate of running for reelection in democratic periods is 71.5%. While this is not extremely low, it is low compared to systems with recognized legislative careerism, such as the U.S. or Japan, where over 90% of incumbents typically run for reelection. This low rate seems particularly puzzling given the *candidato nato* rule and other pro-incumbent incentives in Brazil. Moreover, in Brazil the 71.5% average actually overestimates deputies' "true" preferences, because a number of deputies either take a leave of absence to serve in municipal, state, or national government during the term, or actually resign during the middle of the term to take a position as municipal mayor (see below). Deputies who resign can no longer be considered "eligible" for reelection, and I subtracted them from the total number of deputies before arriving at the denominator in the equation that calculates the "seeking reelection" rate. For example, in the 1991-94 legislature, twenty-seven sitting deputies won election as mayor and resigned, deflating by 5.4% the total number of deputies "eligible" for reelection.

*Spreading Power Near and Thin: Flat Internal Hierarchy and the The Absence of Universalistic Access Norms*

We now know that Brazilian deputies will say that they do not value a seat in Congress relatively highly, and that they run for reelection at a low rate compared to countries where scholars recognize legislative careerism. The internal structure of the Chamber provides additional evidence of deputies' lack of interest in building up a congressional career. If Brazilian deputies valued a seat in Congress relatively highly, they might seek to increase the political return of holding onto a seat, in order to build up an incumbency advantage, as in the U.S. (cf. Polsby 1968; Mayhew 1974; Price 1977). For example, they could create legislative "niches" to accumulate policy expertise, they could establish a number of powerful positions within the legislature, and they could establish a universalistic norm of access to these positions. However, Brazilian deputies have not endowed congressional seats with powers that would provide a return at the next election: instead, a relatively flat internal hierarchy of positions exists, and no universalistic norm of access exists.

Although deputies could create an "internal career ladder" within the Chamber that would reward continued incumbency with increasingly powerful positions, few positions of real power exist within the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies, either within parties or within the Chamber's

committee or internal leadership structure. This is not to say that *no* hierarchy of positions exists, only that the average deputy has little opportunity over time either to climb a career ladder or to build up his own “fiefdom” within the legislature.

The hierarchy of positions in the Brazilian Chamber has really only two rungs: top and bottom. A deputy who pushes to the top reaches a position of influence: most agenda-setting and decisionmaking power is concentrated among party leaders and in the hands of the members of the *Mesa Diretora*, a kind of legislative board of directors, over which the Chamber President (akin to Speaker of the House) presides. However, only about two dozen “top-rung” positions exist (there are 513 deputies). Figueiredo and Limongi conclude that in the Chamber “there exist few positions of power that would help establish a congressional career” (1996, 25).

Positions on the *Mesa Diretora* are highly coveted. Among other responsibilities, the Chamber President presides over plenary sessions, deals regularly with the President of Brazil, sets the legislative agenda, and appears on the nightly news frequently. Other positions on the *Mesa* involve substituting for the Chamber President when he is unavailable to preside, allocating office space to deputies and parties, hiring and firing of the Chamber’s internal staff, and controlling the Chamber’s internal purse-strings. However, access is extremely limited: only seven positions on the *Mesa* exist. Moreover, a deputy cannot even hope to maintain the position for the entire legislature, as deputies select new *Mesa* members every two years, and reelection is prohibited (Brasil. Câmara dos Deputados 1994, Art. 5.).

Party leaders also have significant power: they meet with the Chamber President to establish the legislative agenda, have extra office space and staff, and can cast votes for their delegations under certain conditions in the plenary. Positions of “vice-leader” exist, but these positions have little if any power (Novaes 1994). Parties sometimes keep their leaders for the entire legislature, but others change every two years (or even every year), impeding one deputy from consolidating his or her rule (Figueiredo and Limongi 1996, 24). The number of party leaders is limited to the number of parties. Even in Brazil, notorious for its fragmented party system, this means fewer than a dozen party leadership positions exist at any point in time.

If a deputy fails to reach one of these two positions, unlike in the United States, for example, he or she cannot hope to specialize in a policy area and build up a legislative “niche” in a committee. The primary reason for this is that although after the 1987-8 Constitutional Assembly the legislative branch took back some of the power it had lost under the authoritarian regime (Fleischer 1990; Shugart and Carey 1992), the executive branch still dominates policy-making by controlling the agenda and maintaining most of the initiative and technical capacity for submitting legislation (Bernardes 1996; Figueiredo and Limongi 1996).

Another reason is that in the Chamber, committees have a “secondary and imprecise role” (Figueiredo and Limongi 1996, 25), precisely because most deputies are not interested in developing the capacity to legislate or develop a niche. Given this, deputies have limited the power of committee presidents (chairs): the internal rules of the Chamber require new chairs every year (Brasil. Câmara dos Deputados 1994. RICD, Article 39). Another indicator of deputies’ disinterest in developing legislative capacity is that on average, over half of a committee’s membership changes from year to year. One scholar has concluded that “Because no incentive exists in the Chamber for deputies to invest in specialization, there is also no reason for them to remain in one committee, given that they have no guarantee of rising through a committee hierarchy” (Bernardes, 93) and reaping electoral benefits from such dedication.

If a deputy fails to reach the top rung in the Chamber, he or she remains with everyone

else on the bottom rung. On the bottom, so many deputies fall into virtual anonymity that an indigenous term has emerged to describe back-benchers: *baixo clero*, literally meaning a member of the “lower orders” of the clergy. Members of the *baixo clero* get no respect, no glory, and no attention. While the “cardinals” of the Congress grab the spotlight, the “lower orders” scramble to have their speeches “taken as read” into the Brazilian Congressional Record so that local radio stations back home can report that the deputy “gave” a speech on the plenary floor (*Folha de São Paulo* 1/19/97, p. 7). In sum, a hierarchy of positions exists within the Chamber, but the vast majority of deputies never get off the bottom rung. Few positions exist within the Chamber that would allow the average deputy to gradually build up power or construct a “niche.” In contrast to systems that have established congressional careers, in Brazil the value of a seat does not appear to increase with time.

Even if the number of power positions is limited, we might suppose that deputies could develop some kind of universalistic norm for reaching the top rung. For example, deputies could create a system that would benefit more senior members, as in the US or Japan (Epstein et al., 1997). However, no such “seniority system” exists in Brazil, because deputies do not see a career in the Chamber as a long-term option. To be elected chair of a committee, seniority is unimportant: the distribution of posts is not institutionalized according to level of experience, and from 1989-1996, freshmen presided over 43.3% of Chamber committees (N=111) (Bernardes, 89). Novaes reports that “the designation of committee chairs is rarely tied to questions of technical capacity” (134), and instead involves personalistic wheeling and dealing. Less experienced deputies can not only obtain committee presidencies, but experienced observers of the Brazilian Congress have noted that “older deputies do not even covet those positions” (Figueiredo and Limongi 1994, 19) because the place of committees within the hierarchy of power in the Chamber is ill-defined. In sum, unlike in the United States, the distribution of power in the committee system is not institutionalized according to level of experience.<sup>6</sup>

To become a party leader or reach the *Mesa*, experience does apparently matter more, but still, no institutionalized access norm exists (Figueiredo and Limongi 1996, 23-4). For party leaders, during six years (1989-94) in seven of the largest parties, first- or second-term deputies held the position of leader 59% of the time (ibid.). For positions on the *Mesa*, for example, in the 1991-94 legislature, a *suplente* (a candidate who does not finish high enough on the list to win a seat outright, but who takes office by virtue of a higher-placing candidate resigning or taking a leave of absence to take another position) was elected 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President for the 1993-94 term (Novaes, 119n), and in the 1995-98 legislature, a young (40 years old) third-term and a man who had served as *suplente* twice but who won his seat outright for the *first* time only in 1994 served as Chamber Presidents. These men won election to the *Mesa* because of their personal prestige, not because of their extensive experience within the Chamber.

In sum, although at first glance a seat in the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies appears quite attractive, in comparative perspective Brazilian deputies run for reelection at low rates, indicating that they may not value a long-term career in the Chamber very highly. Moreover, although ambition theory suggests that if deputies valued incumbency highly they would allow individual deputies to accumulate an ‘incumbency advantage,’ in the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies we observe a relatively flat hierarchy of positions, and no institutionalized non-discretionary norms for accessing those posts. These findings cast doubt on the notion that Brazilian deputies value a

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<sup>6</sup> Parties decide committee assignments internally. In most parties, politicians self-select. In the PT, the party makes the decision as a group (Novaes 1994).



congressional career very highly. In the remainder of this section, I present less-detailed information on the benefits of holding several other offices in Brazil.

### *The Value of a National Portfolio*

In 1997, twenty-one civilian ministries existed in Brazil (Ministério da Administração Federal e Reforma do Estado 1996). From time to time, ministries are created (e.g. Culture and Science and Technology in 1985) or extinguished (e.g. Administration in 1989) (Fundação Getúlio Vargas/CPDOC, N.d.). Career politicians do not typically fill all ministries; sometimes people with more ‘technocratic’ profiles become ministers. Ministers receive the same salary as a federal deputy, but the attractions of the job are the perks, the pork, and the power of the pen. Ministers command an entire department of the national government, and are often chosen because of their leadership qualities in relation to Congress. Consequently, they receive a great deal of national media attention, and senators and deputies constantly seek them out.

Individual ministries’ political attractiveness vary: the Ministry of the *Casa Civil*, or Chief of Staff, has enormous political power but no budget and no direct control over hiring and firing, while the Ministry of Political Coordination has dubious political value as well as no budget and no direct control over hiring and firing. In contrast, the Minister of Finance has a relatively small budget, but guides the national economy, giving him considerable influence beyond the halls of Congress. Career politicians typically fill the clearly ‘political’ ministries, such as Transportation (which controls the road-building budget, for example), Agriculture (which controls subsidies and investments in that policy area), and Labor (which controls a great number of political jobs). The President distributes these ministries with the goal of building a stable Congressional coalition (Amorim Neto 1995). In short, because of its significant power and prestige, a national ministry appears to hold considerably more political attraction than a seat in Congress.

### *The Value of a Governorship*

Brazil’s 27 governors serve four-year terms, with one consecutive or unlimited nonconsecutive reelection allowed. Armed with ample resources and mostly unhindered by oversight, governors in Brazil possess the power to influence federal deputies’ electoral bases and career opportunities. This gives governors, and the states they rule, a voice in Congress (Abrucio 1995). Governors’ influence derives from control over state-government pork-barrel funds and over thousands of jobs in the state-government bureaucracy. Governors also coordinate many large-ticket investments that involve federal-government funds, and they may control or influence many nominations to *federal* government posts in their state, in the so-called “second and third echelons” of the federal bureaucracy. Notably, while few deputies expressed much interest in staying in the legislature, politicians often expressed views similar to this ex-deputy’s:

The legislature was, for me, an accidental journey. I never felt like ‘a legislator,’ I never fully realized my potential there. Resources [for your career] come much more from the state government than from the federal government, and when I went to collect the return on my investment, I ran for vice-governor, not for deputy.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Interview with Ivo Wanderlinde.

Control over these resources gives governors power over deputies: if the deputy opposes the governor, either at the state or the national level, the governor can exclude him or her from the distribution of “credit,” or refuse his requests to land his cronies nice jobs. Brazil’s electoral system exacerbates deputies’ vulnerability to gubernatorial influence. In Brazil, the entire state is the electoral district; deputies are elected at-large. Consequently, although some deputies concentrate their electoral bases in a few contiguous municipalities (Ames 1995a), deputies can and do seek out votes in any corner of their state. This ability is a double-edged sword, however, because even for a deputy with a concentrated vote pattern, if he waffles in his support of the governor, the governor can “sponsor” a competing candidate, for example by letting the newcomer “take credit” for a project, in just a part of the deputy’s bailiwick.

In addition, governors hold power over municipal mayors, whom federal deputies rely upon to bring out the vote. Despite their recent gains in fiscal resources, the vast majority of Brazilian municipalities are tremendously poor. Although mayors can seek funds in Brasília, governors control the distribution of resources for many municipal public works projects. Political criteria often determine distribution of funds; because of their vulnerability, mayors seek to remain on good terms with the governor. Consequently, a deputy must also remain on good terms with the governor, for the governor might “punish” the deputy by cutting off “his” municipalities from state-government programs. The mayors in the “punished” municipalities would then turn to a different deputy, one presumably on better terms with the governor.

Few “checks and balances” exist at the state level to control governors’ political machinations. State legislatures across Brazil make little effort to oversee state-government spending (Azevedo and Reis 1994). Instead, state deputies scramble to enter the governor’s party coalition, knowing that if they fail to do so, they will be cut off from the resources they need to advance their careers (Abrucio 1995). Second, governors nominate their cronies to the one organ that might oversee state government, the *Tribunal de Contas do Estado*. The state legislature must approve these nominations, but governors typically ‘buy’ support for their nominees easily, assuring himself that his actions will never be scrutinized (ibid.). Finally, scant public accountability exists at the state level: in comparison to municipal or national government, the public cares relatively little about what state governments do (Balbachevsky 1992).

In short, control over sizable budgets, the power to hire and fire, an electoral system that leaves deputies’ electoral bases vulnerable, and little accountability provide Brazilian governors with an arsenal of carrots and sticks they can employ against politicians in their state. This potential gives them influence over *federal* deputies, which in turn gives them power that party leaders have in other countries: influence within Congress.

### ***The Value of a State Portfolio***

Every state in Brazil has a secretariat modeled on the national ministry. Like the national ministry, states often change the institutional composition of their secretariats, and career politicians also do not fill all positions at the state level. Salaries of state secretaries are lower than a federal deputy’s,<sup>8</sup> but the offices’ attractions, like national ministries’, are political, not financial: prestige, pork, and the pen. State secretaries run entire state-government departments. In some states, these departments have larger budgets and more power to hire and fire than some

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<sup>8</sup> In São Paulo, Brazil’s wealthiest state, the base salary of a high-end state official was about \$5,800.00/month in April of 1996. A few state officials earn much more, most notoriously lawyers for state-government corporations, but these positions are not typically held by career politicians (*O Estado de São Paulo* 4/17/96, p. 6).

national ministries. Because they are constantly on the road, inaugurating state-government public works projects, for example, state secretaries also receive a good deal of media attention. The prestige and power of these offices lift state secretaries into a position as much-feared candidates for (re)election as federal deputy or even governor. Politicians pointed to the attractiveness of positions in the state secretariat. For example, one stated that

When I was a state secretary, I was more effective. I felt more useful to my state than I do holding a seat in Congress. The exercise of an activity within one's state ends up being more gratifying in both the sense of working for the public benefit and working for your own benefit, because you're closer to the people, closer to the problems of your voters.<sup>9</sup>

Given the powers and prestige associated with state secretariat positions, and what politicians say about those positions, we have reason to believe politicians value a seat in Congress relatively less than a seat at the top of state-government administration.

### *The Value of a Municipal Mayoralty*

The smallest unit of government in Brazil is the municipality, akin to the county in the U.S.. Brazil has over 5500 municipalities, ranging in size from tiny hamlets of a few hundred souls to the city of São Paulo, with a population of nearly ten million. Mayors serve four-year terms, and can run for one consecutive or as many nonconsecutive terms as they please. Like the other positions, while a mayor may make a good salary, political power is what makes the position attractive: in every municipality, the mayor is the local political "boss," the person the people turn to with requests. Across Brazil, city councils are weak; the population looks instead to the mayor to solve local problems (cf. Couto and Abrucio 1995; Andrade (ed.) N.d.). The attractiveness of a mayoralty may depend on the size of the municipality: in larger and wealthier municipalities, the mayor may also control a good number of political appointments and a sizable budget, and has the final word on the division of the spoils. Moreover, like state secretaries, the mayor gets considerable media attention and political credit for implementing public works programs within the municipality. 65% (3585) of Brazil's municipalities have fewer than 10,000 voters, but 119 municipalities have over 100,000 (TSE 1996); half this number will elect a federal deputy in any state. A successful mayor from a larger municipality can reasonably expect to count on considerable local support if he were to seek a different political post when his term expires.

Even a position as municipal mayor in Brazil offers more political prestige and power than does a seat in Congress. As one deputy stated,

In a Chamber of 513, a deputy can't stand out. It's rare, very rare. Many deputies don't feel that they have any power. Whereas a mayor, even of a medium-sized city, he's the boss. He is the power, he has the power of the pen. In the Chamber, nobody has the power of the pen! It's impossible...for the average deputy to feel that he has any power.<sup>10</sup>

One politician summed up this perspective by saying,

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<sup>9</sup> Interview with João Henrique.

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Alberto Goldman.

From the point of view of a political career, a mayoralty represents a real advance. Many deputies say...that winning the race for mayor of his principal city is the most important thing that could happen to him. It represents the crowning achievement of his career, his highest aspiration. It's almost as if the term as federal deputy was some kind of intermediate point in between his real career, which is linked to the municipality.<sup>11</sup>

### *Summary*

Given only the benefits of each office, national minister appears most desirable, and governor also seems quite attractive. Moreover, politicians typically explained that positions in the executive branch of *subnational* governments, such as state secretary or municipal mayor, provide greater political payoffs than does a position as federal deputy. One politician encapsulated his colleagues' views and affirmed that

There's a strong tendency for a person in the legislature to have interest in a position in the executive. Either as governor or mayor of a good-sized city. These are more able to establish their presence politically, to stand out more. Governors and mayors have the power, like the president, to set their own budget and distribute resources, which of course brings benefits to the executive. I think that executive positions provide more status, and consequently more political projection.<sup>12</sup>

Given deputies' comments, the data on rates of running and winning reelection, and the similarities that Brazil exhibits relative to some other cases (co-temporaneously or not), we already have reason to believe that a seat in Congress holds but a middling position on the Brazilian political career ladder. In the next section I will attempt to assess the probabilities individual politicians associate with obtaining each of the five offices I have analyzed.

### **What are My Chances?**

To continue my cost-benefit analysis, in this section I will consider the probabilities a politician might associate with obtaining each office. Certainly, the hardest office to achieve would be national minister, because fewer than a dozen of these positions open up in any given legislature to career-minded politicians. Only about 1% of deputies reach the ministry. Likewise, because Brazil has only 26 states plus a federal district that elects a governor, few politicians can hope to reach a statehouse. On the other hand, each governor controls a secretariat, modeled on the national ministry. The probability of attaining a position in the secretariat is higher than that of governor, and if we limit our sample of politicians to sitting federal deputies who take leaves of absences (see below), the probability of reaching the secretariat is about 10%. Likewise, although Brazil has over 5500 municipalities, only about 100 of these are "worthy" political prizes for a politician who has already reached the Chamber of Deputies. Given that a mayoral race is a plurality race,<sup>13</sup> a politician's chance of winning would be relatively low.

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<sup>11</sup> Interview with Antônio Carlos Pojo do Rêgo.

<sup>12</sup> Interview with Onofre Quinan.

<sup>13</sup> Or majority-runoff if the city has over 250,000 people or is a state capital.

What about winning election as federal deputy? Table 2, column two, relates the average percentage of deputies who win reelection, given that they run, in every election year since 1945. The average for democratic periods is 63%, and increases significantly during the authoritarian period to 75%.<sup>14</sup>

**Table 2: Aggregate Percentage of Deputies Winning Reelection, and by Number of Terms Held, at Each Election Date**

Year	%Win	%Win 2	%Win 3	%Win 4	%Win 5>
1950	50.0	50.0	--	--	--
1954	69.2	66.4	75.0	--	--
1958	62.7	57.6	71.2	65.8	--
1962	73.4	68.9	71.7	87.1	88.9
1966	72.9	70.0	73.3	85.7	75.9
1970	75.4	76.5	70.7	83.3	76.5
1974	80.7	78.4	70.5	77.4	81.0
1978	71.8	71.6	73.1	68.8	72.4
1982	71.4	72.3	69.1	77.3	67.9
1986	60.6	62.9	60.3	53.3	56.3
1990	54.5	51.7	57.8	65.4	58.3
1994	61.5	56.1	70.3	75.0	78.3

That only 63% of Brazilian deputies manage to win reelection casts some doubt on the notion that Brazilian deputies use their access to pork-barrel goods to their advantage (cf. Ames 1995b). Is this claim thus false? Three possibilities exist: 1) the aggregate rate disguises an incumbency advantage that deputies accumulate over time, as Ames (1987, 112-114) suggests; 2) deputies use particularistic goods to lay the ground for a non-congressional job; or 3) deputies are in fact poor pork-barrellers who have limited success either holding onto their seats or laying the ground for a different position. Here, I address the first possibility. Elsewhere I address the second and third (Samuels 1998, Chapters 6-7).

Table 2 columns 3-6 breaks down deputies' probability of reelection success by the number of terms held. For example, column three provides the percentage of deputies who run and win a second consecutive term, column four a third term, etc.. If an incumbency advantage exists in the Brazilian Congress, we should see the probability of winning reelection increase after the first term, as political scientists have demonstrated is the case in the United States, or increase as deputies accumulate terms. However, given the figures in Table xxx, no clear incumbency advantage exists. In some years, the rate of success goes up after winning a second term, but in other years, it goes down.

Even in years when a deputy's probability of reelection success increases with his or her level of incumbency, we must keep these figures in comparative perspective: for example, in the United States, the "model" of congressional careerism, an average of 92.8% of Representatives won reelection between 1960 and 1992 (Abramson et al., 1995, 259). In Japan, where politicians are also considered to demonstrate parliamentary careerism, an average of 81% of deputies who

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<sup>14</sup> The military expelled 146 sitting deputies (mostly in 1964, right after the coup, and in 1969) and stripped thousands of people of their political rights during its reign, limiting but not prohibiting political competition. Consequently, deputies who wanted to keep their seats during this period had an easier time of it.

ran for reelection from 1958 to 1990 won (Hayama 1992). In Chile, 80% of incumbents running for reelection won in 1993 (Chile 1993). In sum, Brazilian deputies win reelection at relatively low rates.<sup>15</sup> Still, this rate is still high relative to one's chance of winning a plurality race. In sum, despite comparatively low reelection rates, of the five positions I analyze here, deputies ought to believe they have the best chance of obtaining a seat in Congress. Minister and then governor ought to be the hardest positions to obtain, followed by state secretary and mayor.

### **How Much Does it Cost?**

Finally, let us estimate the costs associated with seeking each office. I will estimate C in monetary terms, although we could certainly associate other costs with running, such as opportunity costs, or stress-induced health problems. I will estimate C by comparing the relative costs associated with running for several offices in Brazil with the relative costs of running for similar offices in the United States. In doing so, we will gain an idea of what the average politician would be willing to spend to reach that office – and consequently also gain an idea of how valuable politicians consider each office.

In terms of campaign costs, scholars have claimed that Brazilian congressional elections are among the most expensive in the world (Mainwaring N.d., 110). Ames reports that the average successful candidate spends a million dollars (1995b, 331). Recent estimates based on interviews, however, provide an average of between 200 and 400 thousand dollars per campaign (BICBanco 1997). Using declared campaign donations for Brazil, Table 3 shows that winning candidates for federal deputy claim to raise about 2.75 times more money than do winning state deputy candidates, and winning senate candidates declare about four times as much as do winning federal deputy candidates (TSE 1997). In the U.S., using the declared campaign expenditures (Gierzynski and Breaux 1993, 521; Federal Elections Commission 1998), winning candidates for the House of Representatives declare 6.4 times as much as a winning candidate for a state legislature, while winning senate candidates declare more than 50 times the expenditures as a state legislative candidate. In 1994, the one Real in Brazil was worth approximately one U.S. dollar.

**Table 3: Campaign Costs, Brazil and USA**

<u>POSITION</u>	<u>BRAZIL 1994</u>	<u>USA 1986</u>
Senate	377,000	3,200,000
Federal Congress	94,000	397,000
State Legislature	34,000	62,000

The monetary costs of obtaining a national ministry are no higher than that of obtaining a seat in Congress, because deputies are nominated from within the Chamber (or from within the Senate). Little information exists regarding the costs of a mayoral race in Brazil, but we can gain an idea of their expense by comparing the relative costs of a campaign for governor and mayor of the capital of the state of São Paulo, Brazil's largest and economically most powerful state. There, the winning gubernatorial candidate in 1994 spent at least US\$10 million (well above the national average of about US\$3 million), and the winner of the 1996 mayoral race also spent at

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<sup>15</sup> In other Latin American countries, such as Uruguay (Morgenstern 1996) and Venezuela (Carey 1996), seeking and winning rates resemble Brazil's. However, in both of those countries, party organization and differences in the electoral law may create different incentives for congressional deputies. Only future empirical research in these and other countries would allow for fruitful comparisons.

least US\$10 million (*Veja* 9/11/96, p. 8-15). While the city of São Paulo is Brazil's largest (and one of the largest in the world, with over 10 million people), this finding implies that mayoral races may generally be quite expensive, much more so on average than a race for deputy.

The U.S. and Brazilian figures are not directly comparable – the Brazilian figures are donations, while the US figures are expenditures – but even if donations do not accurately reflect expenditures in Brazil, we have no reason to suppose that the ratio of expenditures between offices differs from the ratio of donations between offices. That is, the true cost of a seat in the national legislature in Brazil is most likely about three times the cost of a seat in a state legislature. The *relative* cost a deputy would attribute to one office or another, not the *actual* cost in either country, allows us to compare how politicians evaluate the relative costs associated with each office in both countries.

These numbers suggest that U.S. politicians appear to be willing to spend a great deal more for a seat in Congress relative to a seat in a state legislature, relative to their Brazilian counterparts. Moreover, we must consider the implied distribution of how politicians value the benefits of office in the U.S. and in Brazil: in the U.S., around 95% of incumbents (those who run again) are willing to spend about \$400,000 to seek reelection. This means that the distribution of the benefit-values is not normal but is skewed to the right; 95% of a sample of incumbent U.S. Representatives would value their seat as greater than \$444,444  $\{(\$400,000)/(.9)\}$ , given that the probability of victory is about 90%. On the other hand, in Brazil, only 70% of incumbents (those who run again) are willing to spend the \$100,000 to seek reelection; the distribution of B in Brazil would look slightly more like a normal curve compared to the U.S.. This point makes the *actual* cost of a successful campaign in Brazil even less relevant: whatever the cost, the important fact is that fewer Brazilian deputies are willing spend what it takes to run for reelection.

In sum, in Brazil the most expensive race appears to be for governor, and the cheapest are of course appointed political positions, although typically a politician has to spend a great deal of money to reach the level at which he or she would be considered a significant “player” and be considered for appointment. Depending on the size of the city, the second-most expensive race may be for municipal mayor, followed by senator. Finally, while running for federal deputy costs most than running for state deputy, a comparison with the United States reveals not only that Brazilian politicians appear willing to spend relatively less, but that fewer politicians are willing to spend what it takes to get to or stay in Congress.

### **Which Way is Up?**

Given the information and argument above, a clearer picture of the hierarchy of political positions on the Brazilian career ladder emerges. For example, politicians clearly value the position of governor more highly than that of state secretary, state secretary more than state deputy, senator more than federal deputy, and minister more than federal deputy. Importantly, deputies report that the benefits of an appointed position in the state executive or of serving as municipal mayor exceed those associated with being in the Chamber.

As far as costs go, running for federal deputy appears expensive in absolute terms, but it generally costs relatively less than running for any other elective office except state deputy, and in any case many politicians may run for federal deputy simply to place themselves among the available candidates for an appointed position in either the national or state level executive-branch, which have greater benefits. Finally, although the probability of winning a seat in the legislature is certainly higher than winning a race for executive office at any level of government,

the balance of the costs and benefits of *repeatedly* winning a seat in the Chamber do not appear to outweigh the costs and benefits of seeking office *outside* the Chamber. In short, Brazilian politicians do not appear to seek to build a career within the Chamber of Deputies, but instead value other positions outside the Chamber, at the subnational and/or national levels, more highly. In the next two sections, I will demonstrate that deputies focus on positions at the subnational levels.

## CONGRESSIONAL “HOT SEATS”

Since 1945, Brazilian federal deputies have been able to take a leave of absence from their seats in Congress. Moreover, due to non-concurrent electoral calendars, many deputies have also run for office at the state or municipal level *during* their term in Congress. When a *titular* (an incumbent deputy) takes a leave, a *suplente* (substitute) takes the seat and gains all rights bestowed on the *titulares*. However, if the *titular* desires to return to the Chamber, the *suplente* must leave. In this section, I explore the details of this phenomenon and explain the variation over time in the levels of rotation from Congress to national, state, and municipal levels of government.

I gathered data on every resignation and leave of absence deputies took since 1945 (for details, see Samuels 1998, Chapter 3). Examples of this phenomenon include:

- 1) Deputy Adroaldo Mesquita da Costa (PSD-RS) takes a leave of absence during the 1945-50 term to become Minister of Justice (national-level).
- 2) Deputy Jutahy Junior (PFL-BA) takes a leave of absence during the 1987-90 term to become Secretary of Justice of Bahia (state-level).
- 3) Deputy César Maia (PMDB-RJ) resigns his seat from the 1991-94 term to become mayor of the city of Rio de Janeiro (municipal-level).

I hypothesize that when positions such as the ones in these examples appear, progressively ambitious deputies in Brazil ought seek them. During democratic periods, this has in fact been the case, and in particular, deputies have moved to state and municipal levels of government. While no analyst could ever estimate the total percentage of deputies who *want* to give up their seat, I will present data on the number of deputies who either leave the Chamber, or who put themselves up as candidates for other positions outside the Chamber during a term: since 1986, after which the data are precise, nearly 40% of deputies have either manifested a desire to leave the Chamber (e.g. by running for an office such as municipal mayor), or have actually done so (e.g. by winning election as mayor or by gaining appointment to state or municipal bureaucratic posts). This is a significant portion of all sitting deputies; it is quite possible that if more positions were available, an even greater number of deputies would abandon their congressional seats.

Table 4 provides the percentages of deputies who abandoned their seat for a position outside the Chamber in each legislature since 1945 (this table does *not* include information on those who run for but do not win election to an outside position).



**Table 4: % of Deputies Abandoning their Seat Directly after Election for a Position at the Municipal, State, or National Level**

<b>Legislature</b>	<b>%Municipal</b>	<b>%State</b>	<b>%National</b>	<b>%Total</b>
1945	0.0	11.2	4.3	<b>15.5</b>
1950	0.3	5.3	3.0	<b>8.6</b>
1954	0.9	7.1	2.8	<b>10.7</b>
1958	0.0	7.7	7.1	<b>14.7</b>
1962	0.2	5.4	3.9	<b>9.5</b>
1966	0.5	5.4	2.2	<b>8.1</b>
1970	1.3	1.6	0.0	<b>2.9</b>
1974	3.0	5.2	0.6	<b>8.8</b>
1978	0.7	8.8	0.7	<b>10.2</b>
1982	3.6	9.0	1.9	<b>14.4</b>
1986	4.7	8.8	2.5	<b>16.0</b>
1990	6.8	11.1	3.0	<b>20.9</b>

The table reveals two things. First, one can compare the relative percentage of deputies who leave for each level of government: the number of deputies who leave for state-level positions has historically been highest, and since the 1970s, the number of deputies who leave to take municipal-level positions has exceeded the number of deputies who leave to take national-level positions. Overall, in the most recent legislature, one of five deputies succeeded in obtaining a position outside the Chamber (another 20% attempted to do so).

Second, we can observe and attribute a trend to the influence of the 1964-85 military regime. While deputies have rotated out of the Chamber since the onset of democratic elections in Brazil in 1945, the military regime limited deputies' range of action (as they also limited electoral competition). For example, the military virtually eliminated deputies' ability to land national-level positions for about fifteen years, handing out only four ministerial positions to deputies in the 1967-70 term, zero positions for both the 1971-74 and 1975-78 terms, and two for the 1979-82 term. Subsequently, more deputies gained access to national-level positions.

Military rule also limited deputies' access to state-level positions, but for a shorter period. Following its allies' disastrous performance in the 1974 elections, the military began to allow deputies to regain access to the halls of power at the national and state levels: by the 1975-78 legislature, deputies were electing to return to state-level politics, and could do so at the same rate they as in the 1967-70 legislature. The percentage of deputies taking state-level positions has continued to increase since 1975, reaching 11% of sitting deputies in the 1991-94 legislature.

Below, I analyze each line in detail. I will return to my argument about the probabilities, costs, and benefits associated with obtaining each type of political position. That is, although Brazil has experienced dramatic social, economic, and political transformations over the last fifty years, the probability of and benefits to obtaining a state- or municipal-level position have remained high (or even increased) with time. On the other hand, while the benefits to attaining a national-level position remain undoubtedly very high, the chances of reaching (and remaining at) the national level may have even declined.

### **National-Level Positions**

In terms of the calculus of careerism for each individual deputy, the crucial variable regarding national-level positions is the probability of access. As in other countries, a deputy's probability of landing a national-level position is relatively low because these positions are in short supply relative to state and municipal positions and because no norm regulates access to them. Consequently, national-level positions remain attractive as *part* of a career, but we cannot assume that deputies consider a national-level position their primary career aspiration.

#### *Short Supply of National Positions*

The first reason that the probability of landing a national position is low is because, as is commonly the case, supply remains short. Prior to 1964, deputies had a slightly higher probability of landing a national-level position: as Chart 3.1 and Table 3.1 above indicate, currently less than 3% of deputies typically have access to a national-level position of whatever kind during a legislature, whereas about 4% of deputies accessed a national-level position during the 1945-64 period. Importantly, most national-level jobs to which deputies have rotated were *not* permanent positions: eighty of 119 national-level positions found since 1945 were ministerial positions in the President's cabinet, and another twenty-two were temporary political appointments in the executive branch. Only seventeen of 119 national positions were permanent appointments to such positions as Supreme Court Justice.

As for ministerial positions, these are in short supply simply because there are so few ministries relative to the number of deputies: eleven ministries on average from 1946-64 and seventeen on average from 1987-present (Fundação Getúlio Vargas/CPDOC, N.d.). While presidents may juggle their ministries during a term, compared to the possibility of landing a position in the state-level secretariat, the probability of landing a ministerial position is much lower. Thus, even though a ministerial position is more prestigious, deputies weigh both the probabilities and the benefits (and the costs) when considering the utility of expending effort to seek a political position, and we can therefore reasonably suppose that deputies discount their chances of obtaining a ministry relative to their chances of obtaining a state-level position.

In short, relatively few deputies gain access to a national-level position. In some countries supply could be greater if high-level permanent bureaucratic sinecures were a rung on politicians' career ladders, but this is apparently not the case in Brazil. While national-level positions are undoubtedly politically plum prizes, and deputies probably would take one if it were offered, deputies weigh the relatively low probability of attaining such a position when assessing the utility of expending scarce resources on attaining such a position. Consequently, they would tend to discount national-level positions.

#### *Absence of Norms Regulating Access to National Positions*

A second factor that would lead individual deputies to discount the utility of seeking a national-level position is the absence of "norms" that regulate access. As Epstein et al. (1997) have hypothesized, countries with legislative-based career structures ought to develop a system whereby more senior members have access to Ministerial or Cabinet Secretary Positions. In systems like Brazil that lack institutionalized intra-legislative career structures, the converse might hold: no rule or "norm" such as seniority would determine who gains access.

We can confirm that this is the case in Brazil. Although ministers do tend to have longer than average congressional careers before entering the ministry, it is not uncommon, particularly after 1985, when a civilian returned to the office of the President, for “freshmen” to become ministers of state. In sum, historically, during democratic periods a small percentage of deputies rotate to national-level positions. However, deputies most likely discount the probability of attaining such positions, because few national-level positions exist and because no clear norm regulates access.

### **State-Level Positions**

As I explained above, appointed positions in the state-level executive branch hold significant political attractions for career-minded deputies. In terms of their attractiveness relative to national positions, deputies most likely regard the utility of seeking a state-level position more highly relative to national-level positions because of greater probability of access. As the Figure and Table above indicate, a larger percentage of deputies each legislature take state-level positions than national or municipal positions. Deputies who seek a state-level portfolio typically have close ties to the elected governor, or are leaders of state-based factions in alliance with the governor. Relative to national-level positions, deputies have a higher probability of obtaining a state-level position. While there is only one national ministry (with seventeen ministries currently), each state has a secretariat, modeled after the national ministry. Thus, while any individual deputy has about a 17/513 chance *ceteris paribus* of gaining access to a ministerial position, he or she has a much higher probability of gaining a state-level position because there are only between eight and seventy deputies from each state.

Currently, as they did from 1945-64, more Brazilian deputies take leaves of absences to state-level positions than go to national- and municipal-level positions combined. This demonstrates the “stickiness” of the attractiveness of a state-based political career in Brazil over the last fifty years (at least), and in many ways this is not surprising, given the reemergence of the power of governors and of state-based political interests in contemporary Brazilian politics as well as the historical strength of federalism during non-dictatorial periods of Brazilian history (Abrucio 1995; Samuels and Abucio 1997; Mainwaring and Samuels 1997). In sum, because of a higher probability of access and because state-level positions provide significant political benefits to career-minded deputies, deputies regard the utility of seeking a state-level position more highly relative to the utility of seeking a national-level position.

### **Municipal-Level Positions**

As Table 4 indicates, while almost no deputies resigned their seats during the 1945-64 legislatures to take municipal-level positions, beginning in 1958, the ‘municipal’ trend begins a clear upward trend, and by the 1991-94 legislature, nearly 7% of sitting deputies resigned to take a municipal-level position (nearly all as mayor). Deputies’ increasing desire over time to take municipal-level positions becomes more pronounced when we include data on those deputies who not only *win* election but also those who *seek* election as mayor during the off-year municipal elections. Accurate data exist beginning with the 1987-90 legislature that detail the percentage of deputies who run for mayor. In 1988, about 22% of sitting deputies ran for a municipal position (Departamento Intersindical de Assessoria Parlamentar 1988).<sup>16</sup> In 1992, DIAP (1992) reported

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<sup>16</sup> The source is imprecise, and counts deputies and senators together when calculating the percentage. I do not know whether the count is thus high or low.

that 16.3% of deputies were candidates (92.7% for mayor, 6.3% for vice-mayor), but admitted that its estimate might be biased downward. In 1996, 22.6% of sitting deputies ran for a municipal post (82.8% for mayor, 16.4% for vice-mayor, and 0.8% for city council) (*O Estado de São Paulo* 1996). In sum, about 20% of sitting deputies have run for mayor in each legislature beginning in 1987.

While a deputy's probability of winning a mayoralty race is necessarily low, the benefits to winning are very high. However, until recently, very few Brazilian municipalities attracted career-minded politicians. Thus, here I will explain why we observe an increase in number of deputies leaving for municipal-level positions over time. While most municipalities in Brazil are dirt-poor and hold few political attractions for career-minded deputies, in general municipalities' political importance in Brazil has increased dramatically since 1945. Reflecting this transformation, in 1988, for the first time municipalities were given status as federal entities in the constitution.

In sum, since 1945 a good portion of Brazilian federal deputies have abandoned their seat in Congress immediately following election and taken a position outside of Congress. Most deputies who do so take a position at the state level, or more recently at the municipal level. This evidence bolsters my contention that Brazilian politicians do not value a career in Congress very highly, but would rather jump to a political position at the subnational level. Some of the deputies who take leaves of absences return to the Chamber before the term is out. The next question is what they do at the end of the term. In the next section I address this question by exploring deputies' post-congressional careers.

## POST-CHAMBER POLITICAL CAREERS

In the United States, scholars have claimed that the House of Representatives perfectly suits members' reelection desires (Mayhew, 82) we know much about how House members attempt to assure repeated reelection, but we know almost nothing about what they do after leaving the House. The only (to my knowledge) analysis of post-congressional careers in the U.S. suggests that more than half of retiring House members choose to leave politics entirely, and of the remaining group, most remain linked to national-government politics. Specifically, Herrick and Nixon (1996) found that 9% of ex-members of the House retired from the workforce completely, 24% went into private legal practice, 20% went into private business, 13% lobbied the federal government, 13.5% worked in the federal bureaucracy, 5.7% went into teaching or education, 2.4% went into political consulting (excluding lobbying), 1.6% were employed by an interest group, and only 2.4% took a position in a state-government bureaucracy (8.6% listed "other" occupations).

No research on Brazil has tracked federal deputies' post-Chamber careers, possibly because the U.S. model of a legislature as one populated by long-term residents has driven the questions researchers have asked. My research shows that most Brazilian deputies do continue their political careers (or at least they attempt to do so) following their stay in the Chamber. I hypothesize that Brazilian politicians *should* exhibit "progressive" ambition, here operationalized as a desire to build a political career outside of the Chamber of Deputies following election as deputy. For a deputy to "count" as having progressive ambition, he or she would have to show up as seeking a position in municipal, state, or federal government, or a state or national party executive organ after his or her first election to the Chamber of Deputies. The population I am exploring includes the 2837 people who have won election outright as federal deputy (I exclude *suplicantes*) in Brazil since 1945. For a number of reasons, I selected a sample of 1057 deputies

(37.3%) from this population, and tracked these deputies' post-Chamber political careers (for methodological details and specific examples, see Samuels 1998, Chapter 4).

Before presenting the aggregate results, I will provide the reader with several examples of deputies' careers, in order to characterize several "ideal type" career paths. Deputies' careers exhibit a great deal of variation – that is, the distinction between a "state-based" career and a "congressional" career is by no means cut and dry. Nevertheless, we can posit several ideal types and then move to the aggregate data to see the broad trends. Let me suggest four ideal-type Brazilian political career paths.

- **Congressional – Local:** this deputy would resemble in some ways the U.S. "model" legislator, spending a good portion of his or her political career in Congress, and attempting to bring particularistic goods to his or her vote base in order to insure continued reelection.
- **Congressional – National:** deputies of this type would also have long congressional careers, but would instead focus their energies on partisan politics or national political issues.
- **State – directed:** these deputies would use their time in Congress as a stepping-stone to advancing their state-level career ambitions
- **Municipal - directed:** these deputies would use congress as a political trampoline to seek municipal-level office.

Very few deputies exactly fit one or another type. Still, broad trends do emerge from the data: in brief, the evidence indicates that very few deputies fit the first two types, while a good number of deputies correspond to the latter two types. Table XX lists the percentages of deputies in the sample who sought or obtained different political positions following a stint in Congress.<sup>17</sup>

**Table XX: Post-Chamber Positions Sought or Held**

<b>POSITION SOUGHT</b>	<b>%DEPUTIES SEEKING</b>
<i>State</i>	
Candidate Governor or Vice-Governor	9.6
Candidate Senator or <i>Suplente</i> Senator	9.7
Candidate State Deputy	6.3
State Secretary or other State-Level Position	21.0
Member, State Party Executive	27.7
<i>Municipal</i>	
Candidate Mayor/Vice-Mayor	15.8
Municipal Position or City Council	2.6
<i>Federal</i>	
Minister of State	4.1
Other Federal-Government Position	8.5
Candidate President/Vice-President	1.2
Member, National Party Executive	2.9

Percentages in this table do not add to 100 because often deputies held more than one position. Controlling for this, overall, 52.7% of all deputies sought or held at least one state-level position, 17.9% sought or held at least one municipal-level position, and 13.7% sought or held at least one national-level position. If we remove membership in a state party from this calculation, 37.4% of all deputies in the sample sought or held a state-level position. Overall, 64.4% of deputies in the sample pursued some kind of position after serving in the Chamber.

<sup>17</sup> Deputies who left immediately after election are included in these figures.

In sum, the aggregate data provide considerable evidence that confirms my hypothesis. Over 50% of the deputies in my sample exhibited progressive ambition to the state level, about 18% sought or held a position at the municipal level, and only about 14% sought or held a national-level position. While deputies do not attempt to build long congressional careers, they do attempt to continue a career in politics outside the Chamber, typically at the state or municipal level.

## CONCLUSION

I have shown that Brazilian politicians do not see sitting in the Chamber of Deputies as a long-term career option: when asked, they confirm that a seat in Congress is a middle-level position on a political career ladder; they run and win reelection at relatively low rates; they rotate to positions outside of congress when presented with the opportunity; and, following their relatively short stints in Congress, typically move to positions in state and/or municipal government. This finding should push scholars to reexamine several important aspects of Brazilian politics, and encourage comparativists to pay close attention to the structure of political careers when hypothesizing about policy-making.

In particular, the evidence I presented bolsters my claim that scholars should adopt a non-Mayhewian assumption about political careerism in Brazil. If “a politician’s behavior is a response to his office goals” (Schlesinger 1966, 9-10), then my findings suggest that Brazilian deputies do not act like the stylized members of the U.S. House, as “single-minded seekers of reelection” (Mayhew, 17). Progressive ambition in Brazil takes on a different form, and ought to shape politicians’ behavior differently: Brazilian deputies act not to develop a long-term congressional career, but to move *up* the career ladder by moving *down* to subnational politics. This argument questions the use of the Mayhewian assumption that deputies in Brazil seek a congressional career. Instead of congressional careerism, we should instead assume that deputies in Brazil desire a career *outside* of Congress, that a seat in the Chamber is merely a middle-level rung on the career ladder, and that election to the Chamber may only instrumentally serve deputies’ progressive ambition in that it may allow a politician to ‘pave the path’ to a position at the state or municipal level.

This revised assumption should encourage scholars to rethink motivational assumptions applied to questions about policy-making in Brazil (and by implication, elsewhere). For example, my findings question the conventional wisdom about why deputies spend so much energy seeking pork-barrel goods. Ames (1987 and 1995a) implies that deputies seek pork to construct secure electoral bailiwicks, and Mainwaring (1995, 389) has claimed that “defeating incumbents is not easy” in Brazil, implying that incumbents have advantages that derive from possession of a seat. Deputies do spend a good deal of their time seeking pork and jobs for their associates. The existing literature implies that deputies employ these resources to improve their probability of reelection. However, we have reason to question the hypothesized link between legislative pork-barreling and an incumbency advantage in Brazil, mostly because reelection rates are relatively low in comparative perspective. Elsewhere I demonstrate an absence of a link between deputies’ pork-barrel success and their reelection success, and demonstrate that deputies use access to the pork-barrel to ‘pave their way’ to a position as mayor or governor (Samuels 1998, chapter 7).

Given my revised motivational assumption, we might also question why deputies would vote for or against policy proposals. For example, Geddes (1994, 12) argues that Brazilian deputies do care about reelection, and presents hypotheses and deduces conclusions using this

assumption about when and why deputies would favor bureaucratic reform. That is, the reelection motive is a *necessary* condition for her argument to hold. In contrast, I would argue that this condition does not empirically portray reality correctly, and that therefore, Geddes' conclusions about the conditions under which bureaucratic reform might occur might be erroneous. In short, an exploration of political careerism outside of the United States will push scholars to reexamine many topics of interest to political scientists.

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